

REPLACEMENT CLAIMS

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1. A method for transmitting a message between a sender user associated with a first e-mail firewall and a recipient user associated with a second e-mail firewall, the method comprising:

intercepting a message from the sender user intended for the recipient user;

searching an encryption directory for an entry associated with the second e-mail firewall associate with the recipient user;

retrieving an encryption key associated with the second e-mail firewall, the second e-mail firewall associated with a plurality of recipient users;

encoding the message with the encryption key of the second e-mail firewall to provide an encrypted message; and

allowing the message to proceed to said recipient user.

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6. A method for receiving a message by a recipient user associated with a second e-mail firewall from a sender user associated with a first e-mail firewall, the first e-mail firewall encoding the message by using an encryption key of the second e-mail firewall, comprising:

intercepting the message by the second e-mail firewall, the second e-mail firewall associated with a plurality of recipient users;

decoding the message with a private key of the second e-mail firewall; and

allowing the message to proceed to the recipient user.

7. A method for controlling e-mail message transmission across an e-mail firewall, the e-mail firewall interposed between an internal network and an external network, the method comprising:

intercepting a message from a sender user associated with the internal network, the message directed to a recipient user associated with an external network;

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filtering the message by examining content associated with the message by employing content filter conditions of the e-mail firewall to provide a filtering result; and

restricting the transmission of the message in accordance with said result.

NEW CLAIMS

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16. An e-mail control system for filtering e-mail communication transmitted from an internal site to a plurality of external sites, the e-mail control system interposed between a public network and a private network associated with said internal site, the e-mail control system comprising:
 - a policy manager, the policy manager intercepting an e-mail message transmitted from a user associated with said internal site to at least one user associated with said external site, the policy manager applying at least one policy to an intercepted e-mail message by reference to properties of the intercepted e-mail message; and
 - a security manager coupled to the policy manager, the security manager adapted to process said intercepted e-mail message in accordance with policy results received from said policy manager, the security manager facilitating the transmission of said e-mail message to the user associated with said external site in response to predetermined policy results from said policy manager.
17. An e-mail control system for filtering e-mail communication received by an internal site from an external site, the e-mail control system interposed between a public network and a private network associated with said internal site, the e-mail control system comprising:
 - a policy manager, the policy manager intercepting an e-mail message transmitted to a user associated with said internal site from a user associated with said external site, the policy manager applying at least one policy to an intercepted e-mail message by reference to properties of the intercepted e-mail message; and
 - a security manager coupled to the policy manager, the security manager adapted to process said intercepted e-mail message in accordance with policy results received from said policy manager, the security manager facilitating the transmission of said e-mail message to the user associated with said internal site in response to predetermined policy results from said policy manager.
18. A method for filtering e-mail communication between an internal site and one or more external sites, comprising:

intercepting an e-mail message transmitted between an internal site and an external site, the intercepting comprising suspending a transmission flow of said e-mail message between said internal site and said external site, the e-mail message associated with at least one recipient;

applying at least one policy to an intercepted e-mail message by reference to properties of the intercepted e-mail message; and

processing said intercepted e-mail message in accordance with policy results received from said policy manager, said processing including sending said e-mail message to said at least one recipient in response to predetermined policy results from said policy manager.

19. The method of Claim 18, wherein said policy refers to a sender address.

20. The method of Claim 18, wherein said policy refers to a recipient address.

21. The method of Claim 18, wherein said policy refers to content in the message body.

22. The method of Claim 18, wherein said policy refers to a message header of said e-mail message.

23. The method of Claim 18, wherein said processing said intercepted e-mail includes an action from the group consisting of pass, quarantine, re-route, return to sender, and send notification.

24. A method for filtering e-mail messages transmitted from an external site to an internal site, comprising:

intercepting an e-mail message having a sender address associated with an external site;

extracting at least one recipient address from the e-mail message;

determining whether a policy is applicable to said message by reference to said extracted recipient address;

applying at least one policy to said e-mail message when said determining provides that said at least one policy is applicable to said e-mail message, said applying providing a policy application result; and

processing said message in accordance with said policy application result.

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25. A method for providing secure e-mail communication between a first organization and a second organization, comprising:

- interposing a first e-mail firewall between a first e-mail server of said first organization and a public network;
- interposing a second e-mail firewall between a second e-mail server of said second organization and a public network;
- the first e-mail firewall intercepting an e-mail message from a sender associated with said first e-mail server to a recipient associated with said second e-mail server;
- the first e-mail firewall encrypting said e-mail message with a public key of the second e-mail firewall;
- the first e-mail firewall transmitting said encrypted e-mail message to said recipient;
- the second e-mail firewall intercepting said encrypted e-mail message prior to receipt by said second e-mail server;
- the second e-mail firewall decrypting said encrypted e-mail message with a private key of the second e-mail firewall; and
- the second e-mail firewall transmitting said decrypted e-mail message to said recipient.

26. The method of Claim 25, further comprising providing a first access firewall between said first e-mail firewall and said public network and further providing a second access firewall between said second e-mail firewall and said public network.
